

Introduced: 1/14/85
Referred: Resources
and Finance

BY FAHRENKAMP, FAIKS
AND COGHILL

1 IN THE SENATE

2

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 3

3

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

4

FOURTEENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

5

Requesting that the State of Alaska

6

pursue a land exchange with the U.S.

7

Department of the Interior to exclude

8

the Dunkle Mine Township from Denali

9

National Park and Preserve.

10 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

11 WHEREAS the boundaries of Denali National Park and Preserve were
12 expanded by the passage of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation
13 Act in 1980 to include the historic Dunkle Mine Township; and

14 WHEREAS the Dunkle Mine Township contains good quality coal deposits,
15 at least four high-grade gold/silver vein deposits, placer gold deposits,
16 and large low grade copper/precious metal deposits; and

17 WHEREAS the proximity of the Dunkle Township to the Alaska Railroad
18 and the Parks Highway enhances the favorability of the area's mining poten-
19 tial; and

20 WHEREAS claimholders had established rights to the minerals in the
21 area before the time the park was expanded to include the claims; and

22 WHEREAS in recognition of the fact that the Dunkle Township has known
23 mineral potential, Section 202(3)(b) of ANILCA mandated that a study of the
24 relationship of mineral resources and mining activity to the other resourc-
25 es of the area be done by the Alaska Land Use Council in cooperation with
26 the Secretary of Interior; and

27 WHEREAS a primary reason for including the Dunkle Township in the park
28 was protection of habitat for the Denali caribou herd and there has been no
29 conclusive evidence presented during the study process that the area

1 contains critical habitat for the herd or that increased mining activity
2 will necessarily have a significant adverse effect on the herd; and

3 WHEREAS the potential for mineral development of the Dunkle Township
4 will be lost if the area stays within the park, as park status will not
5 allow new mining claims and may invalidate many of the present claims; and

6 WHEREAS one of the alternatives offered in the 1983 Draft Environ-
7 mental Impact Statement of the Dunkle Mine Study was to remove mineralized
8 areas and mining activity from the park boundaries and place them under the
9 jurisdiction of the State of Alaska; and

10 WHEREAS there is no conclusive evidence that deletion of the Dunkle
11 Township from the park would result in a lack of protection for the caribou
12 herd, as any adverse effects that may occur from increased mining activity
13 could be mitigated under the direction of the state; and

14 WHEREAS there is state owned land contiguous to Denali National Park
15 and Preserve with scenic and wildlife values equal to the Dunkle Township;
16 and

17 WHEREAS Section 1302(h) of ANILCA clearly authorizes exchanges in
18 conservation units; and

19 WHEREAS public testimony solicited during the study process was in
20 strong support of an exchange; and

21 WHEREAS the Department of Interior has indicated that it regards a
22 land exchange as one of the better solutions for the problems identified in
23 the Dunkle Mine Study, and initial discussions have occurred between the
24 State Department of Natural Resources, the National Park Service, and the
25 Office of the Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks indicating a
26 willingness by all parties to negotiate and exchange;

27 BE IT RESOLVED by the Alaska State Legislature that the State of
28 Alaska and the Department of Interior take whatever action is necessary to
29 exclude the Dunkle Township from the Denali National Park and Preserve

1 through a land exchange that would allow the National Park Service to
2 acquire a nonmineralized township with high scenic and wildlife habitat
3 values and allow the state the opportunity to develop the mineralized lands
4 in the Dunkle Township; and be it

5 FURTHER RESOLVED that the land exchange be as simple and uncomplicated
6 as possible, preferably for lands of equal value to the Dunkle Township and
7 adjacent to the Denali National Park and Preserve.

8 COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable William
9 Clark, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Interior; the Honorable Bill
10 Sheffield, Governor; the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Frank
11 Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative,
12 members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.